

## Statement by the UniWiND Executive Board On a General Concept of the Doctoral Training Phase

With regard to European efforts to standardise doctoral training (as a "third cycle" of the Bologna Process) in addition to the first two phases of studies, Bachelor and Master, the Executive Board of the German University Association of Advanced Graduate Training (UniWiND/GUAT) would like to once again emphasise its 2011 statement on the organisation of doctorates at German universities ("Junge Forscherinnen und Forscher: Empfehlungen zur Promotion an deutschen Universitäten"):

"The third cycle of the Bologna Process (*doctoral training*) is fundamentally different from the first two cycles due to its focus on research: over-regulation of this phase is not considered to be helpful."<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, we reject the structural and contextual integration of the doctorate into the course of studies at a university. The doctoral phase is the first phase of independent work as a researcher and not a fixed phase within a course of studies. This independent, original research is at the core of any PhD. Additional qualification programmes offered by universities are welcome and supported, but essentially voluntary. Specifically the issuance of credit points for additional courses, as, e.g., according to the "European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System" (ECTS), and their inclusion in defined curricula is not essential. It may be possible within individual programmes or at individual universities, but may not become mandatory and a general requirement for German PhDs. In particular, the concept of issuing credit points for the genuine research performance is to be rejected:

"During doctorate, research achievements cannot be quantitatively measured as *workload*. Therefore, the 'European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System' (ECTS) is not a tool designed for the PhD."<sup>2</sup>

We also reject the accreditation of the *Promotionsverfahren* (PhD examination procedure). Given the high level of quality awareness of the UniWiND member universities, the UniWiND Executive Board clearly rejects European regulations of the doctorate based on the first and second cycles of studies. Regulation would severely impair the development of innovation, which is a demand of the EU Commission. Instead, for Germany, the UniWiND Executive Board supports further development of the established higher education system, which is characterised by plurality in terms of ways and types of how to do a doctorate. The ultimate goal is to ensure a high level of quality for advanced graduate training and excellent conditions for young researchers, for which individual research plays a central role. As a result of this, the EU Commission's "Principles of Innovative Doctoral Training" can be optimally implemented.

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<sup>1</sup> Translation from UniWiND e.V.: Junge Forscherinnen und Forscher - Empfehlungen zur Promotion an deutschen Universitäten, 2011, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.